

## SERMONIC SECTION.

## HOME LIFE AND DUTIES.

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*Go home to thy friends.*—Mark v.: 19.

*Let every man, wherein he is called, there abide with God.*—1 Cor. vii.: 24.

You recognize in that first text the reply of Jesus to the maniac out of whom He had cast a legion of devils. This man certainly had passed through a very remarkable experience. Not many men are possessed by a *legion* of devils. Nearly every man is possessed by one or more, but to be possessed by a legion is to have the entire soul thronged by a riotous, saturnalian crew who trample down reason, conscience and will, driving the unrestrained passions into all manner of insane freaks and violent excesses. This man was "exceeding fierce," running among the tombs at night, cutting himself and crying horribly through the darkness, and if any luckless mortal passed that way he leaped out upon him and tore him with the savage strength of a tiger. But the cure of this man was no less remarkable than his malady. Jesus passed by, and afar off the evil spirits recognized Him and began to cry for mercy, but by one irresistible word they were cast out, and the man came instantly into possession of himself.

Now, surely so remarkable a case will be made much of by the Lord Jesus. This man will at once beset out into the world as a witness to the power of his Saviour. Or he will be taken into the number of the disciples, to always stand by the side of Jesus as a living proof of the divine Word. The man himself seems to have thought that something unusual of this sort was called for in his case. He prays to be always with Jesus. He imagines that by this remarkable experience he is lifted up

out of the plane of common life. Some new and unique life corresponding to his experience will doubtless be opened to him by his Lord. But instead he is met by the very quiet, tame words, "*Go home to thy friends.*" There, at the point of your daily life, you are joined vitally to your fellow-men, and if you are to do them any good by this new and heavenly experience it must be at that point where you touch them in actual life. They saw you begin to go wrong in those common relations and affairs. As one evil spirit after another gained ascendancy your friends witnessed the progress of your ruin, till at last you broke away in uncontrolled madness and fled to the tombs. They are the ones, above all others, to be moved by the sight of your restoration. If they see you entering again the dishonored and broken relations of your life, and by a spirit of power and love and soundness restoring harmony in that disordered realm, they must say, Of a truth God has been with this man. This is the point of your opportunity to make a spiritual impression upon the world. Go back to your former life, to your old friends, and from that center work outward.

The same thought lies in the second text. The early Christians, especially among the Greeks, were possessed with the thought that in their conversion to Christ something unearthly, prodigious, had happened. They longed for and expected marvelous experiences, to speak with tongues, to fall into trances, to see visions, to work miracles. They likewise expected a complete translation from their past life. They were full of riddles and questions. Were they delivered altogether or only in part from the Jewish ritual? Were the marriage ties dissolved or modified? Were they

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